



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

FINISTÈRE: THE ARTIST'S CORNER OF BRITTANY.*

BY

F. S. DELLENBAUGH.

MEETING a friend one day in Paris after a long absence he inquired where I had been. "In Finistère," I replied. "Finistère!" he exclaimed, "where is Finistère—somewhere up around St. Petersburg, isn't it?" I was obliged to laugh, and suggested that he was thinking of Finland, and that he ought to go straightway to the Gare Montparnasse and take a train for the west, when he would find himself, in the course of some fifteen hours, in the locality of which he was apparently so ill-informed. This ignorance, however, of an interesting and peculiar region is not exceptional.

Finistère is the "Wild West" of France, and it is of absorbing interest, notwithstanding the absence of Indians, sky-mounting peaks or profound chasms. The natives reminded me sometimes of the Navajos of Arizona, and there is a ruggedness and wildness about the landscape that is quite thrilling, especially when we remember the habits, prevailing here as late as the second century, of crucifying prisoners of war, nailing their heads in triumph to the gate-post, or deftly forming the skulls into drinking cups with gold and silver mountings, for use at banquets and to cheer the honored

* Copyrighted, 1888.

guest ; or, on the practice existing at a comparatively recent date, of plundering vessels wrecked by accident, or lured by false beacons to destruction. Wrecks, indeed, were regarded as a legitimate harvest and were relied on as a chief source of revenue. Tradition relates that one way of deceiving the luckless mariner was to tie a light to the head of a bull, and after attaching his head to his forelegs, lead him along the rocks, thus obtaining that irregular, pitching motion given by a vessel on the wave, and deceiving the pilot into thinking safety lay in that direction.

The coast, even to-day, is a hazardous one for the navigator, though entirely from natural obstacles. Rocky and precipitous, the shore is broken by deep and long estuaries that reach back into the land to meet the rivers and swallow them up ; ragged promontories shoot out and disappear in detached rocks and reefs into the sea ; and in places the greensward and the groves almost meet the salt waves. There are few long beaches and few beaches unbroken by rocks. Inland, the country is hilly and full of ravines, rising to something over a thousand feet in two ranges of "mountains," trending east and west. The bays are thick with rocks, and all along the coast rocks jut, here and there, out of the water at high tide or at low tide, while others lurk dangerously near the surface. Navigation, therefore, is not easy, and it behooves one to proceed on a voyage only with a competent pilot. Yet comparatively few wrecks occur, as the government has thoroughly charted the dangers and keeps the coast well lighted. In making port, as many as four or five lights have sometimes to be taken into consideration at once. The Pointe du

Raz is the most dreaded place, with the Ile de Seins and innumerable rocks all about it,—a locality bearing about the same relation to Finistère, if not to France, that Cape Horn does to South America or Point Judith to Rhode Island.

The rivers and streams are rocky and swift.

The tide rises and falls in some of the bays and estuaries in emulation of the Bay of Fundy, and everywhere the aspect of the coast undergoes a great change between high and low tide. The shallower waters are drawn off completely, leaving vessels helplessly careened to await their return.

The region has been rather out of the line of the annual Anglo-American tourist wave, and altogether possesses still much of its picturesque originality and primitiveness. All over the continent—all over the world, in fact—a process of equalization is going on to-day, due to modern facility of intercourse and exchange, and wearing away peculiarities not only of countries but of individuals; an excellent thing doubtless from a humanitarian standpoint, but from the purely artistic it is to be regretted. Journey through Italy, Austria, even Spain, and you perceive everything converging toward a common standard, excepting, perhaps, language, and in Europe it is only in remote districts, in out-of-the-way corners, that wide differences exist and the habits and costumes of the olden time prevail. Brittany is one of these corners that has largely escaped the polishing or elevating process, and the crowds of tourists, because of its lack of extensive railway communications, and of its situation so far in the west. If the course of Empire is westward, the course of the indefatigable, omnipresent,

all-seeing tourist is mainly eastward, and he turns not back to "do" Brittany, but hies him on his way to accomplish the dream of his life, view the Colosseum by moonlight—and die! Brittany therefore still retains a flavor of those centuries when the Gaul was yet in power and the Druids performed their ancient rites; and, of all Brittany, Finistère retains the most, is the wildest, the most primitive, being the furthest removed from the world of Paris as it was from the world of Rome. To this extreme position it owes the ancient name of the southern portion, Cornouaille, from the Armorican, Kern-é, the horn—that is, the point or end of the earth—Finistère.

Originally, of course, this territory was as savage as the American continent before the advent of the Europeans, and the race that then occupied it is a matter of mere speculation. At the time of the Roman invasion (58 B. C.) Brittany was held by various tribes, or families, to which the general name Armorican was given, derived from the native words "ar," on, and "morik," from "more," the sea. These Armoricans were Celts, and lived in a half savage condition. Their houses were of the rudest kind. Before the beginning of foreign traffic, which was probably first carried on with the Phœnicians, from whom they learned mining and other important things, they used hatchets and knives of stone and arrows pointed with flint, after the fashion of our American Indians, but they then acquired the skill to make sabres of copper and iron. The Gauls were fair, with blue eyes, but as there are many inhabitants of Finistère to-day who are very dark, it is not improbable that tribes of Iberians, who preceded the Celts in the country, may have re-

mained and mingled with the new comers. There seems to be some difference of opinions as to the exact relationship of the Armoricans to the other Gauls. Cæsar classes them with his division, Celts, occupying at the time of his exploits the country from the Garonne to the Seine, while other writers class them with the Belgians, occupying the country further east, a circumstance which would seem to point to a mixed community, though the differences could not have been great, as the Gauls and the Belgians belonged to the same family, one merely in advance of the other in the westward march. There was no government, only loose tribal organization, of which the chief was the supreme authority in secular matters. Fighting was their main industry and recreation.

The religion, Druidism, was peculiar and primitive like everything else. The Druids were a distinct order of priests, chosen when young from the various tribes of Gauls, according to ability or influence, and educated by the older priests. Their headquarters were in the island of Anglesey, and there the initiation and preparatory study took place. Not only were they priests and scholars, but magistrates as well, and through their spiritual influence exerted almost unlimited power throughout Gaul and Britain. They were also magicians and astrologers, and officiated at the offerings of human sacrifices. Their teaching was entirely oral, and all their knowledge and records were preserved by tradition. The oak was regarded as sacred, and their ceremonies were performed in the deep groves. The mistletoe, when found on the oak, was regarded as a most holy object, and even to this day in Brittany is believed to be a pre-

ventive and cure for diseases and a developer of strength. It is now called, however, in Armorican, Lougan-ar-groas, plant of the cross, a name doubtless applied to it by the early Christians that they might appropriate its influence to propagate their own creed. Brittany, and especially Finistère, was the last locality in France where the Druids maintained their doomed religion. Elsewhere, they were early suppressed by the power of Augustus, but in this far-away district they continued their sacred rites and guarded their emblems of worship long afterwards, and here may be found to-day, in good preservation, numerous relics of their occupation and sway. These are principally the queer stones, called, in the language of the Breton, menhirs, dolmens, cromlechs, etc., which recall this early and singular priesthood and add another element of interest to the land, contrasting strangely with the elaborate crosses in the Christian churchyards. These stones are attributed to the Druids, but it is not certain whether they raised them or appropriated them from some earlier religion which they supplanted. The Christians,—doubtless in order to destroy as far as possible the connection with Druidism without obliterating the monuments entirely, as was done in other parts of France—in Brittany planted crosses on the tops of them or carved this emblem of the new religion into their sides, and attributed to them scores of legends linking them with Christianity.

Menhir, in Breton, means pillar-of-stone.

Peulven, long stone.

Cromlech, (krom-leac'h,) a round place.

Baraws and galgals, knolls of earth and stones.

Rollers, rolling or rocking stones.

Dolmen, stone table.

The dolmen is a stone, generally flat, supported by several others fixed in the ground, and the name is also applied to a group of large and high slab-like stones arranged in the form of a square, open on one side, and covered by stones above.

A cromlech is a number of upright stones arranged in circles, sometimes in three or four tiers, with a high stone in the centre, though this is not always present, and the work is then called *mallus*. At present, the dolmens are popularly termed by the Bretons "Korigan houses," the Korigans being evil black dwarfs who are supposed to inhabit them and at night dance around in the light of the moon, forcing the inquisitive to join the circle and dance till he drops dead from fatigue. Only if you carry a plough-stick—a stick that has been used for scraping the clods from the plough-share—can you enter this dance with impunity, a fact which was discovered by a laborer and his wife who, venturing one night too near a dolmen, suddenly found themselves surrounded by Korigans, and thought they were lost till they heard the song :

" Lez hi, lez hou,
 Bas en arer zo gaut hou.
 Lez hou, lez hi,
 Bas en arer zo gaut hi,"

to the effect that the plough-stick which the laborer had in his hand protected him from injury, and he was permitted to proceed unharmed.

Another legend relates how a hump-backed red-headed tailor once drew lots with a companion to see which should venture a round with the Korigans. The one to whom the chance fell, the hump-backed red-head,

entered the presence of the dwarfs and asked permission to join their dance, which was readily granted. They made room for him and began to circle round rapidly singing;

“Di-lun, di-meurz, di-mercher,” (Monday, Tuesday Wednesday,) over and over again till the tailor grew wearied and thought it high time to make an addition; so at the moment they said Wednesday, he cried out lustily: “Di-riou a di-guënuer” (Thursday and Friday). “Mat, mat” (good, good), the dwarfs shouted gleefully, and immediately asked what he wanted—honor or riches. He requested to be relieved of his deformity. He was seized, thrown in the air, and came down strong and straight, with handsome black hair. The other tailor then tried his luck. The dwarfs sang not only Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, but also Thursday and Friday, and the tailor at a convenient moment shouted: “Disordre a di-sul,” (Saturday and Sunday). The dwarfs halted instantly and cried “Oh! oh! oh!”

“Saturday and Sunday,” repeated the tailor.

“Oh! oh! oh! What then, what then?” cried the Korigans.

“Saturday and Sunday,” he repeated, and again they demanded what then, but the poor tailor was at a loss to proceed. “What do you want?” they asked. “Riches,” he said, and was flung into the air, as they shouted, “There you have what you deserve!” and he found to his horror on descending that he possessed the hump-back and red-hair that had been taken from his friend. The Korigans were angry because he failed to deliver them from their fate of dancing around Druidical stones till some one comes who says after the days of the week,

"*A cetu echu ou signun*," and there the week ends. These legends occupy a firm place in the imagination of the peasants, who are superstitious, and many, even now, believers in sorcery.

While England and France were developing and emerging from the early darkness of Druidism, Brittany lagged behind, isolated as it was, and vigorously defended by the inhabitants, bold and daring, against encroachment. The name of Armorica was retained till about the middle of the 5th century, when the Anglo-Saxons drove numbers of British families out of England, who took refuge in Armorica, amongst their kindred, and gave the name Brittany to the region. The similarity to-day between the Bretons, Welsh and Irish is striking. The Welsh and Breton languages are still so much alike that a Welsh clergyman doing missionary work in Finistère assured me he had little difficulty in making himself understood before he had acquired the vernacular, which is not surprising when we remember that Welsh and Breton are both Cymric tongues, and that the language of the region is essentially the language of a score of centuries ago. Outside of the towns it is the language of daily intercourse and little French is spoken or even understood—indeed French is frequently as unintelligible as English or any other foreign tongue. In the larger towns even, where the influence of France is most potent, one hears about as much Breton as French, and it is not uncommon to meet with people in the immediate suburbs to whom French is a blank. The government has made efforts to correct this by compulsory study of French on the part of children, but yet they do not cry *Mon Dieu*, but *Ma Dua*, by first impulse, for

Breton is the language of the fireside. Generations must pass before the people all understand French, and centuries before the Armorican is eradicated, if it ever is. The sea speaks to them in their old language on three sides, and the only French contact they have is on the east, where there is a barrier of four other departments of Bretons, the two adjacent ones being strongly Breton, but the others, Ille-et-Vilaine and Loire-Inférieure, constituting Upper Brittany, being French in language and manners. The name of *Galots* was applied by the Lower Bretons to the people of these divisions because of their French affinity, a name that eventually extended to all Frenchmen, against whom there is still a strong prejudice, or dislike. Neither do the English find favor in their eyes, for if the Breton is anything he is loyal to his country, and its early struggles for independence are not forgotten.

The village papers have, many of them, a portion printed in Armorican, usually a letter discussing affairs of the day. Here is a paragraph clipped at random :

“ Ar c’hontrol a c’hoarvez er c’hêriou, lec’h ma zo muioc’h a deskadures hag hec’h anavez guelloc’h an electourien ho dever hag ho gwiriou, pe droajou. Bars ar parresiou divar-ar-meaz, re alies, an electour na sell nemet euz mad pe interest he barres hag he hini he-unan, el-lec’h er c’hêriou, an electour a glask mad hag interest an holl, evel ma’z ê dleet ober.”

Even when the common people of Finistère learn to speak French fluently they do it with such a positive Armorican accent that it is often as unintelligible to a stranger as the Armorican itself ; and where French is comparatively well-spoken there are various differences

that betray the Breton origin of the speaker : for example an "s" sound for "ch," as "sanger" for *changer*, and a "ch" sound for "s," by strange perversity, as *chéser* for *sécher*.

Though an English province for a long time, Brittany was not much affected by being subject to an English king. After 1429 it was an independent duchy. Then it was linked to France by the successive marriages of Anne, duchess of Brittany, with Charles VII. in 1491 and Louis XII. in 1498, but it was not till 1532 that the duchy became permanently annexed through Francis I. It was the last of the provinces to give up its independence, and as we review its history it seems rather strange that it gave up at all and did not remain, like Belgium and Switzerland, a distinct nation.

The area of Finistère is 2690 square miles, and the population in round numbers is 682,000—that is, it is a trifle larger than the State of Delaware, but contains almost five times as many inhabitants. The principal city is the well-known seaport, Brest, founded by Richelieu, with a population of 69,000 and one of the best harbors in France. The capital, however, is not Brest but Quimper (Armorican: Kemper), which was also the capital of the ancient Cornouaille. It now has a population of 14,000, and is a quaint and interesting city resting on the banks of a pretty river, the Odet, about ten miles above its mouth. So ancient is this place that the foundation is unknown, but it is considered by some as identical with Corisopitum, capital of the Corisopites, where the Romans founded a great military establishment. The history of the city begins with the birth of Saint Corentin, about the year 375, and as he is the

patron saint of Finistère, he is entitled to some present consideration. Brought up a Christian he took no part in the struggle against the Romans, but passed his time in prayer at a hermitage by the sea. He was supplied with food in a rather unusual way. From a small fish in a neighboring spring he would cut each morning a slice, returning then the fish to the water where it was immediately made whole again without wound or scar. One day Gradlon (or Grallon), the king of Cornouaille, hunting in the vicinity, arrived with his men, tired and hungry, at the cabin. Corentin carved a slice from his obliging fish and offered it with a jug of water for the royal lunch. He was laughed at, but, nothing better being available, the morsel was accepted, when lo ! the piece of fish was transformed into a bountiful repast and the water into wine. The king was so overcome by this miracle, that he threw himself at the feet of the Saint, gave him a large forest and a castle, and proclaimed him the elect of the true God. Corentin continued his labors till all the people of Cornouaille were converted to Christianity. The king gave him his own palace in Quimper, and went himself to the City of Is to live, a city which was so fine that nothing better could be said of a place than that it was Par-is, equal to Is. Tradition makes it a rich and populous city built in the basin which to-day forms the bay of Douarnenez, and protected from the sea by strong dikes, with sluice gates to let in water when required. The largest opened in the middle with a silver key which the king wore around his neck. Each month he attended in person to the opening of these gates. His palace was one of the wonders of the earth, constructed of marble, cedar and gold.

The king's daughter, Dahut, unfortunately, gloried in all manner of vice, which her father was too weak to prevent and correct, and finally, in her wilfulness, she took possession of the city and the silver key, the emblem of office. (One account says a wicked stranger took the key.) The king secluded himself in his palace to conceal his sorrow, and one evening Saint Gwénole appeared to him, warning him to fly with his faithful servants, because Dahut had opened the great sluice gate and destruction was upon the city. Gradlon, desiring also to save his daughter, took her on his horse, and followed by his officers hastened to escape. They were no sooner without the city than a fearful roaring caused them to turn, and they beheld with cries of horror, in the place of the once beautiful city, only the shimmering sea filling an immense bay. The waves rolled after them with fearful rapidity until Gradlon's attendants besought him to abandon his demon daughter to their fury. Upon this she became so terrified that a film obscured her eyes, her hands clutched convulsively at the throat of her father, she fainted and fell into the turbulent water, which, engulfing her, pursued the party no further. They reached Quimper in safety, where the king remained ever after, making it the capital of Cornouaille.*

There seems to be some evidence of the existence at one time of a town where the Bay of Douarnenez now is. I was told that walls may be seen in the deep water when the weather is favorable, but I neglected to visit the locality and verify this statement. Doubtless Mr. Ignatius Donnelly would see in this story only another trace of the lost Atlantis. It is supposed that the city

* "En Bretagne :'' par Emile Souvestre.

was destroyed in the 4th or 5th century, and it seems probable that a subsidence of the land caused some such catastrophe. In a chapel which formerly existed in Quimper a candle was kept burning continuously after the disaster to prevent a similar fate overtaking Quimper, through rising of the water in a well close by. It is related that two children once had the curiosity to steal into the church, and taking the holy candle to the curb of the well there tried to extinguish it to see if the water would actually rise, in which event they intended to immediately relight the candle from another with which they had provided themselves. They were discovered in the midst of this amusement and driven away.

The country is in a backward state generally, considered from the high-pressure standard of our time. The products are varied, but agriculture does not receive the same close attention it does in other parts of France. The soil varies, here being sterile and rough, there fertile and productive, that in the north being the best. Potatoes of excellent quality are one of the chief crops, and quantities are shipped to England. At Huelgoat and Pouldaouën are silver mines said to be the richest in France. Wood is the principal fuel, and when a tree is cut down the roots are usually dug out to add to the supply. Along the roads and fences, trees often present a forlorn and grotesque appearance due to a periodical trimming of boughs and branches for fuel, a harvest of fagots. Under this treatment the tree continues to thrive and yields wood for years. There is a great waste of land in the method of fencing with turf walls often more than a yard thick, and as the fields are not as a rule extensive, these numerous battlements take up

a large percentage of the available soil, and give the air of a fortification to the small lots. Often these walls are combined with the prickly gorse, and sometimes the gorse is the principal portion, forming a rough hedge. It is always rich in color, dark green or greenish brown according to the season, and with its bright yellow blossoms adds to the picturesqueness of the country. There is an old saying that kissing is always in order when the gorse is in bloom. Happily the gorse has never been known to be without blossoms. The dark gorse, the dark soil, and the dark granite foundation and boulders give a blackness to the landscape that enhances the quaint and ancient flavor of the region and contributes an element of weirdness that is intensified by the sombre gray skies, which for days or for weeks blot out the sunlight and shower a steady drizzle over the whole land, filling the rude by-roads with mud and water till they are next to impassable. If you are walking you take to the top of the earth wall at the worst places if you can, and find there a veritable *high* way. Even the cows may be seen at times wandering on top of these broad walls. In summer the foliage has a darker hue than in other parts of France, and sometimes at a distance looks positively black. This universal blackness inspired a young painter, who had spent a season there, to describe it as, "A rolling black landscape under a rolling black sky," and he tersely added, "When you want to paint it, just take ivory-black for the highlights and you're all right." Notwithstanding this, there is an abundance of deep, warm color everywhere ; indeed it is the very richness of the color that gives the impression of blackness. Scattered here and there are the re-

mains of once magnificent castles, ruins overgrown with ivy, where one may pause to wonder at the transitory nature of wealth and power. The sunlight falls gently across the old gray stones, the grass is green and velvety beneath your feet, a stillness, profound, envelopes the place which once resounded with the clank of sabre and the voice of pride, and you hear the rattle of dry bones from the centuries gone—fading away into the dissolving past—freighted equally with splendor and with woe.

The houses are all of stone, and small ones or additions are sometimes made of thin slabs set upright on the ground. Dark gray, the stone is soon covered with moss and lichens in the damp air, till there is not much difference in appearance between the house of yesterday and the house of a score of decades ago. The roofs are generally thatched, except in the larger towns, where they are made of slate or tiles. In the farm-houses, even the village houses, the floors are simply of earth. As a rule stoves are not in use, the open fireplace doing duty as a heater and a range, and the fire-place is huge—often large enough to sit down in; in fact a bench for that purpose frequently occupies one side of it. The climate is mild, compared with ours, and the people live much out of doors, summer and winter. The winter I passed there, ice formed only two or three times at night, and then merely a film over small puddles, disappearing almost as soon as the day was done; and in the summer there were few days when I could comfortably wear the thin goods that we find too warm here in July. Choice roses bloomed the whole winter in the open air. Yet the dampness made the cold penetrating, and so far as I was concerned, almost as troublesome as a much lower

temperature in our own country. Ploughing goes on in February, and the spring comes softly and gradually. Sea-weed from the shore is largely used as a fertilizer, great quantities washing up at every storm, the gathering of it forming a pleasant picture.

The farm-houses are usually small, consisting sometimes of but one room, with a loft above. Here the whole family abide, doing their cooking, eating and sleeping—a long oak table with benches serving for the board, and racks over the fire-place holding the dishes. Baking is done in ovens out of doors. The bedsteads are unique affairs, precisely like cupboards, with two sliding doors, easily closed from the inside and made of ornamental open work to admit the air. Doubtless they are the outgrowth of limited quarters, like our own folding-beds, and they seem to serve the purpose satisfactorily, but for my part I would as lief sleep in a china closet as in one of these things; yet the Breton is wedded to them, and some are almost as old as the race, having been handed down from generation to generation, together with other furniture and articles of dress. There was a time, a few years ago, when the most wonderful bargains could be made with the degenerate offspring, for carved beds, cupboards, chests, etc., and I have seen splendid things that were bought for a few francs, but now, alas! the bric-a-brac collectors have roamed the country far and wide, till nothing is to be had except at exorbitant rates. It does not appear to be the nature of the peasant to be avaricious or cunning, but as he comes more in contact with the modern world he learns to keep up with it. There seemed to me to be a simplicity and honesty about the native character that were delightful.

I remember once when I had been walking over the hills, thirst led my companion and myself to enter a farm-house that fell in our way, for a bowl of milk. Only one person there could speak French, and she, a middle-aged woman, was by no means fluent. When we were ready to go, she said the milk was two sous a bowl. I gave her a ten-sou piece, remarking that she need not bother to change it. "Oh yes, sir!" she replied, "two sous is the price of a bowl of milk and I cannot take more than it is worth," and she handed out the change. This simplicity was sometimes noticeable in other ways. A friend of mine gave a clock to a native tinker to repair. In several days he returned with it, and certainly it was going and apparently in good order. My friend was pleased, but his amazement can be imagined, when the tinker took from under his other arm a package done up in a newspaper, saying as he handed it over: "Here are some of the wheels I could'nt get in." The Breton character is contradictory, resembling in this respect that of the Irish. There is a strange mingling of kindness and cruelty, of generosity and selfishness, temperance and intemperance. There is a little rhyme of the country:

"Laër evel ul Leonardd,
 Traytour evel un Treywergadd,
 Sod evel ur Gwennedadd,
 Brusk evel ur Kernevadd."

"Thieving as a Léonard, treacherous as a Trégorrois, stupid as a Vannetais, brutal as a Cornouaillais," which probably depicts the weaknesses of the lower class in the various communities.

Like the rest of Brittany, Finistère has produced its

share of distinguished personages, and we have only to remember Descartes, Abeilard, Chateaubriand, Ginguéné, DuGuesclin, Lesage, Alexandre and Amaury Duval, Fréron, Geoffroy, Souvestre, Renan, Villemarqué and others, to realize to what heights the Breton character can soar.

There are no bolder, better sailors than the natives of this rock-bound coast, and the rugged soil has furnished France with some of its stoutest warriors. The sailors, especially the fishermen, are intemperate; most sailors are. The peasants of the interior are less inclined to intoxication, but all are apt to yield too freely to the temptations of Bacchus. The drink of the country is cider, of which great quantities are annually made, and to the cider is often added cheap cognac, either in the glass or the stomach, and the combination seems to make a very complete and satisfactory drunk. Then the peasant, sailor or fisherman becomes obstreperous and unruly. He spoils for combat, rough-and-tumble fist combat, however, as knives and pistols are never used, and he generally meets it early and often. Failing to find the foe, or if in the contest he is worsted, he seeks balm for his troubled soul in pounding his wife or children, who yield the house to him and make their escape if they can. On Saturday nights, particularly, the *débats de boissons*, of which there are great numbers, are thronged by noisy wrangling crowds, that rival similar congregations in the Dead Man's Gulch or Poker Flat of our own proud West. In this way the fishermen spend the bulk of their earnings, and what is left they bestow on their wives after liberal abuse. An amusing incident occurred to one of the American artists, long resident in

Finistère. A handsome, stalwart fellow he was, six feet in his stockings, fearless, and ready at any moment to administer justice with his own hand. One afternoon as he was going to his room in the outskirts of the village, he came upon two fishermen engaged in the delightful occupation of punching each other's drunken heads. Brown—I will call him Brown—took in the affair, and perceived an opportunity to end a row and help the under-dog-in-the-fight, for the upper man was plainly master of the situation. Brown in his strength and stature was able to pick up the top man by main force and hold him squirming in the air, while he ordered the unfortunate to pick himself up and be off. The unfortunate, eager to obey, scrambled with alacrity for one of his heavy sabots, which had come off in the fray, and was lying immediately at the feet of Brown and his captive. The freed man picked up this sabot, but, instead of putting it on he straightened up, quickly landed a stinging blow with it full in the face of his now helpless antagonist, and ran like the wind, with Brown after him, and the late antagonist after Brown, swearing to kill him at the first opportunity. The threat was not carried out, but never was there a madder man in all Brittany.

Probably the most beautiful portion of Finistère is that around the village of Quimperlé (Kemperlé in Armorican), and it has been called the Arcadia of Brittany. It is a pretty village of about 7000 inhabitants, and a favorite resort of artists and men of letters. A few miles to the westward flows the Aven, upon which, near the sea, amongst the rugged hills, rests the charming little town that has become so well known in the art-world that the art-students' study abroad is scarcely com-

plete without a pilgrimage there. Pont Aven may be said to have been discovered for his countrymen by Robert Wylie, the gifted American painter, who was the first to make the attractions of the place known, and whose dust reposes in the little cemetery on the hill amidst the quaint scenes he loved so well. In him a great artist died before his time, his genius but half unfolded. Following Wylie came American artists by dozens, some remaining months, some years, until there came to be what was called the Pont Aven, then the Brittany school, as other towns were found to be rich in picture material and colonies grew in numbers. It is the artists' corner of Brittany. Americans were numerous, but there came also English, Scotch, Irish, Swedes and French, till the white umbrella sprang up far and near in the green fields like mushrooms.

At Pont Aven a walk of a few yards in any direction brought one upon the diligent student with brush or pencil busy, and often several might be seen at work on the same subject. It was found impossible to exhaust the mine even in this way. The Hotel des Voyageurs, presided over by the amiable and generous "Julia," and the auberge of "Marie Jeanne," the faithful, depended almost entirely on the artists for their patronage, and from May till December they were crowded, both of them. Whoever tarried at either place got attention and his money's worth as he could get them nowhere else in the world that I have ever heard of. The fame of Pont Aven in this respect is not recent, however, for many years ago a Breton remarked that if he had three hundred écus income he would live in Quimper, two hundred in Carhaix, but if he had but one hundred he

would choose Pont Aven, where butter cost no more than milk, fowls than eggs, and cloth could be had for the price of green flax.

The dining rooms at both the hotels in Pont Aven are panelled with sketches painted by the numerous guests till little of the original wall is visible. Amongst the American painters who have lived in Finistère are Messrs. Swift, Nicholls, Bridgman, Grayson, Hoeber, Shean, George Gibson, Field, Rosenberg, McDowell, Edward Simmons, Coffin, Hamilton, Chadwick, Woodward, Smith, Penfold, Birge and Alexander Harrison, Goater, Mosler, Vail, Bolton and Francis Jones, Denman, Picknell, Edgar A. Ward and Thos. Hovenden. The majority of these were in Pont Aven. The effect of the Brittany life may be discerned in the work of these men, an honesty, vigor, and rugged straightforwardness in the attempt to do justice to the largeness of nature by direct study, rather than belittle her by conventionality and the finical puttering of the studio. In the land of the Bretons, at least in Finistère, the artist is free, too, from the annoyance of active and predominating commerce, fashion and expense. Commerce is apparently subordinate to living, and is carried on as a necessity, not as the prime object in life. Fashion throws off her gewgaws and the mantle of display at the frontier, and enters humbly with wooden shoes and a *béret*, thinking not so much how this or that garment looks as of its adaptability and comfort. This breaks the shackles of expense at once and enables the struggling student to make his old coat last almost indefinitely, for when it grows too rusty the village tailor will turn out the other side of the cloth for a small sum and the coat

is new, with the single disadvantage of having the upper pocket and sometimes the buttons on the wrong side. With good strong cloth this process can be repeated time and again, for each turn will find the other side fresher. Provided with a pair of sabots costing only a few francs he is well-clothed, and at the *auberge* he has a room and board for fourteen dollars a month.

The Aven yields in season fine salmon. Its rapid descent furnishes power to numbers of grist mills, many of them queer old buildings with water-wheels of the commonest type, straight, narrow, moss-covered paddles, close against the gray wall, turning merrily in the crystal current with a quick-running rhythm that recalls Jensen's pretty little composition for the piano. The grass is as green as the grass of Erin, and the bubbling water rushes through channels in the rich sward in places, its soft music a soothing lullaby in the quiet air to the high-strung American nerves. So many mills are there that some one once described the place as a town composed of twenty-one buildings,—twenty, mills. Pont Aven is now not alone the resort of artists, but its attractions are appreciated by others. So with Concarneau, ten miles north-west, one of the old towns of Finistère, at present a place of about 5000 inhabitants, including the old fortified portion, the Ville Close, which occupies in a bay an island entirely surrounded by massive ramparts of granite fully 30 feet high. The Ville Close is about a quarter of a mile long from east to west, with one principal street. Access is had by three gates, the one toward the main land being reached by a draw-bridge, while another at the further end opens on a rocky, deep inlet called the Passage. A ferry in the

shape of a yawl sculled by one man puts the traveller across the swift-running tide for the sum of one cent, and shortens his walk to Pont Aven by a full mile.

The town is a well-preserved specimen of its kind, the walls having been several times strengthened and repaired, most extensively near the middle of the 14th century. It has always formed a refuge on the coast, and it is said that in the 15th century it was the retreat of thieves and villains of every description. Happily the population is different now, and the place is the home of fishermen and sailors whose great sin is drinking too much fire-water. The newer portion of the town is one of the most important places in the sardine industry on the coast, because it is just at this point that the sardine attains the most desirable size, in its northward journey, for packing, and the taking and preparing of them is the chief industry. Sardine fishing begins in May or June and sometimes lasts as late as November. Boats come from Douarnenez to take advantage of the early run and, as the season wanes, return. At times there are as many as 1200 boats engaged here in the pursuit. These boats are about 30 feet long, entirely open except a short deck at the stern, and carry two masts that can be readily taken down. The sails have no booms, and whenever a tack is made, they have to be run down and put up on the opposite side of the mast—the windward side. When at work the rigging is sometimes completely cleared away, so that the boat has no appearance of being adapted to sails. It is then pulled along by huge sweeps. The fish are not caught by enclosing them as when a seine is used, but the net, which is of small mesh and made of linen thread, often dyed blue to render it

less apparent in the water, for the sardine is wary, is made to trail straight behind the boat. That is the net, about 20 feet long and six or eight feet broad, is weighted on one long edge and buoyed with cork floats on the other, so that when it is in the water it assumes an upright position like a wall, and it is towed in this position through the water, by one end, as the boat is moved slowly along. The patron mounts the little deck at the stern with a bucket of bait called *roug*, the eggs of the codfish, under one arm, and his keen practised eye ranging the wave. He scatters a little of the *roug* on one side of the net when he discovers the proximity of the fish, and they rise in a shoal to take it. This is the critical moment. He throws a quantity on the opposite side, and the fish, making a dash for it, are entangled in the meshes. When the sardines are numerous the boat does not halt to take the net on board but by giving it a certain pull the meshes are tightened, and with a buoy to mark it, it is cast off and left till a full catch is made. So many fish have been known to entangle themselves that their weight carried the net down and it was never recovered. Another net is immediately put out and the operation is repeated till the nets are all used. Then comes the picking up and the extraction of the fish, the latter work being performed with great care because handling the fish injures them. The net is caught up at the ends and see-sawed till all the fish drop into the bottom of the boat, where they remain till the arrival in port.

You linger on the pier at evening and watch the return. The brown-red sails sweep past into the harbor under the century-worn battlements, till all the air is

luminous and the sails coming out of the misty horizon turn crimson, speeding the dark hulls over a crimson sea. The color dies away and the boats come down upon you like spectres ; the imagination is set free to the music of the tide breaking gently at your feet. The mind runs back into the past, and sees in these dark wings the leathern sails of the Veneti who some twenty centuries ago ruled this wild coast from the mouth of the Loire to Brest, and considered themselves invincible by land or sea. They are congregating for the conquest of the Roman host on the morrow. These are the oak-built craft in which, brave and bold, they breasted the waves of the Bay of Biscay, and even of the British Channel, and here behind us in the Ville Close we perceive one of their villages built in such manner that the high tide cuts it off from the main land, making it impregnable. They knew the coast ; they knew each one of the dark rocks under the shining sea, and what had they to fear from the landlubber Romans. Ah ! strong and daring Veneti, you knew not the strategy of the great Cæsar, who, to-morrow, in eight short hours, sends your craft to the bottom and annihilates you forever.

The gloom and the mystery deepen ; the lighthouse far out on the island of Penfret flashes its warnings around the horizon, and the gray nightfall seems to undulate with the heaving sea in unison with your dreaming. Even the solid pier seems afloat. But you are recalled by the voice of a girl calling to her lover in the gliding boat, or the shriller tones of women shouting the price of fish, at this or that factory, of which there are more than a score in Concarneau, employing hundreds of hands, especially women and

girls. As the fish must be packed immediately on arrival, the factories are often idle the whole day while waiting for the boats to come in, and it may be near midnight before they arrive. Immediately there is a great stir on the digue. The foremen of the various houses open their little wooden offices, about as big as bathing-houses, and the bargaining, purchasing and scoring go on. When a sale is made, the fisherman goes back to his boat and the counting out begins. The fish are counted by the two hundred into coarse baskets, and dipped in the water beside the boat to free them from loose scales and other matter which may have accumulated during the journey in. This settles to the bottom of the basin where the boats lie, and accumulating there, together with other refuse, forms a deep, slimy, odorous mass which, when the tide is out, loads the breeze from the sea with a stench at times almost unendurable.

But one becomes accustomed to foul odors in Brittany to such an extent that he can stand anything. Odors are the objectionable feature of the country. These prevail most extensively around the towns, especially in fishing towns like Concarneau and Douarnenez, where the boiling-oil in the factories contributes no insignificant fragrance. The factories, however, are kept neat and clean, and to one who grows accustomed to the smell of oil there is nothing disagreeable. The fish are thrown on long, low tables, on each side of which is a row of women and girls who, with a dexterous use of a short knife, prepare them for the salt vats, where they remain for two hours. In the interval, if a fresh lot fails to arrive, the girls go outside and dance in a circle and

sing. When the fish come out of the salt they are placed in coarse baskets and given a bath of sea-water under a pump provided for the purpose. Then they are put out to dry in the open air, in the sunlight if there is any, on wire racks with a long handle perpendicular in the middle. These racks hold several dozen, and when the water has dried and the fish begin to shrivel, the rack is taken to the oil-room, where four or five tanks of olive oil are constantly boiling. Each rack is plunged for a moment or two into the hot oil and then set aside to drip, after which the fish are selected and carefully laid in tin boxes of various sizes. Fish that fall below the standard are placed in boxes that are to be marked to that effect—or rather bear a brand that will distinguish them to the initiated from the first quality. As a rule a catch runs about the same, but if the boats have been tardy the fish are not so good. When the box is full it is passed along to the oil-tap where the space remaining is filled with oil, the quality of which varies with the factory and the grade of fish. In some factories olive oil of prime quality is exclusively used ; in others there is about it a suspicion of “the land of cotton, cinnamon seed and sandy bottom.” The box is now ready to seal and passes along to the solderer, who sits at a long table, with a number of others—a table so arranged that the waste oil falling upon it is collected below, to be filtered and used again. The soldering-iron, instead of being heated by charcoal, the old-fashioned way, has a gas-jet inside of it, supplied by a flexible tube connecting the handle with a pipe under the table. The solder and the iron being applied to the edge of the tin cover as it is pressed into position, there is a great spluttering of oil

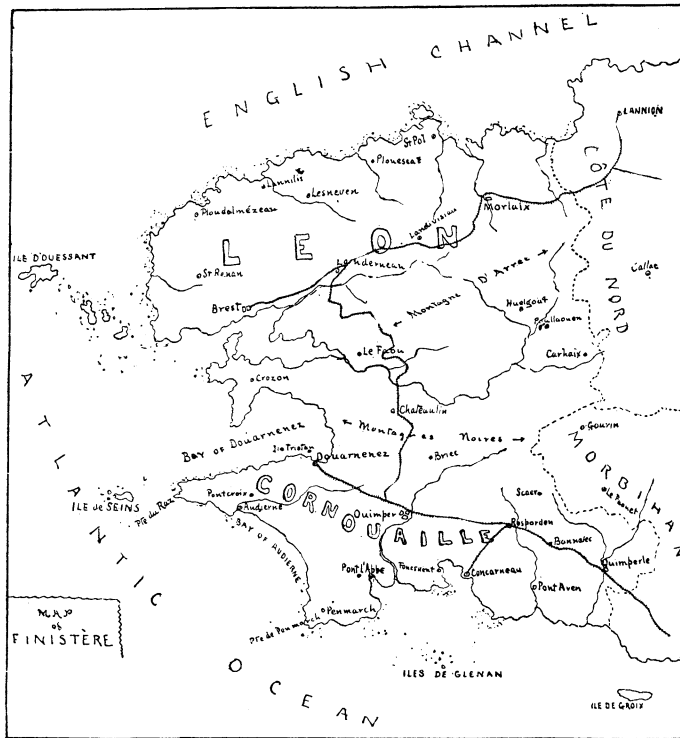
and the fish are at last effectually and permanently caught. A hole is then punched in the cover with an awl to let out imprisoned air, and immediately closed with solder. Next the cans are placed in a huge iron crate and lowered into tanks of boiling water. If there is air in the can it will explode or bulge out, and can be detected and corrected before the final packing in wooden boxes for export to all parts of the world. The sardine is served during the season at the Concarneau hotels so often that the visitor becomes most intimately acquainted with this particular fish, fried, boiled, canned and every other way. But they are always palatable, though in my judgment best after being canned for two or three months. The port is also frequented by craft that cruise along the coast after the tunny.

The sprat is a kind of fish that resembles the sardine enough to be his brother, but he is not half so good and he is much more numerous and easy to take. When sardines are scarce, and even at other times, sprats are packed and sold for them. One firm had a contract to supply the French government with a large number of sardines, and ruined themselves by trying to palm off sprats instead, because the profit would have been greater if the fraud had not been detected. The sardines some seasons are late coming and sometimes do not come at all. Then the factories and the fishermen are idle and the firms of Nantes and Bordeaux are blue. Another season the run is fine and everybody is rich and happy. More than a hundred millions of these fish were boxed during the season I was there. The captain of a boat makes money fast when fish are plenty, and if he is thrifty and temperate he soon owns his own craft and lives comfortably,

but the drink habit is too common and keeps them down. There are usually three men and a boy to each boat, besides the patron, and with 1200 boats this makes a grand total of 6000 individuals engaged at times in taking the fish. They live in their open boats most of the time, their principal food being bread and butter made into a soup, often with a little fish added, in preparing which they build a fire on some stones on the bottom of the boat, suspending the pot over it by means of an oar or pole resting on the gunwales. The soup is eaten out of earthen bowls, and a pipe of tobacco finishes the repast. For shelter they lower the foremast across the other at an angle of forty degrees, and drawing one of the sails over it drop the ends over the gunwales, forming a tent or cabin, where they stretch out on the thwarts and sleep as the boat rides at anchor, ready to take advantage of the morning tide. Several hundred boats arranged in this way are often grouped at evening just off the shore, forming an encampment on the sea, whose fires flicker and flash in the gloom, suggesting gypsies, Indians or pirates waiting for a favorable moment for a land raid. Fire is largely obtained by flint and steel and is preserved in a fire-horn—a common horn with a bunch of tinder at the bottom and a close-fitting cover. In this the fire smoulders constantly, responding quickly when opened with a red glow. The use of flint and steel is not confined to Brittany, however, as even in Paris they are on sale at the tobacco shops. Matches are far dearer than with us.

The principal grounds for sardines near Concarneau are around the Iles de Glenan, a number of low rocky islands about ten miles off the shore. Especially be-

tween them and the main land do the sardines abound. A chapel was erected on one of these islands, which are very small and barren, with a total population not ex-



ceeding eighty souls ; but as the people could only reach it when the weather was fair, and many invited themselves to lunch with the priest, it was not prosperous, and stands now deserted and alone. On the same island are the graves of some shipwrecked sailors. In the midst of the group on a barren rock, the Ile Cigone, there is a granite fortress dating back many centuries. The draw-

bridge is up and it is long since the bugle and the drum disturbed the grim silence.

Washing may be said to be a feature of the landscape in Finistère, because wherever you go you are likely to meet with the white-capped women beside some spring or running brook, pounding the clothes with a wooden bat as if they enjoyed seeing the buttons fly and the fibre disintegrate. These washing places are to the peasant women what the club is to the society man—there the gossip and the news of the day are garnished and interchanged. The grouping and action of the figures are graceful and interesting, and several painters have found in them subjects for their skill. Like everything else, the washing has a legend connected with it. Several women are doomed to wash their shrouds in all kinds of weather at night, till judgment day, because their relative, husband, brother, son, neglected to save them from purgatory by the proper prayers and masses, spending his time in drunken revelry instead. It is claimed the sound of their bats may often be heard if one is daring enough to venture near the washing-place at the proper hour. Evidently another story invented to point the importance of absolution and consequently the religion that met and conquered Druidism. In the story of the White Inn the same object is apparent. A traveller reaches an inn and asks for a room. He is given one the walls of which are the color of blood, and in which no one has ever slept without having his hair turned white with fright. The traveller occupies it, and as midnight sounds he is awakened by a violent shaking of the curtains of his bed. He tries to rise, but his feet touch something

cold and he shrinks to try the other side. A coffin, with candles at the corners and covered with a black cloth with white tears sewed on it, confronts him. "Who are you?" he asks. "Speak—a Christian listens." A voice replies, "I am a traveller who was murdered here by the people who formerly kept this inn; I died in sin and I am suffering in purgatory." "What do you wish?" said the bold Christian, to which the ghost answered: "Six masses in the church of Notre Dame de Folgôat and a pilgrimage by a Christian to Notre Dame de Rumengol." This being promised the modest spirit retired. One month afterward the room lost its red color, becoming white like the rest, and the ghost never returned. The traveller had kept his word.

The people are fond of ceremonies and there are many holidays. Then they appear in their best attire, some of it precious from its age and association; heir-looms treasured in the family through generations, as the old Gaul used to treasure the dried heads of his enemies. The costume varies somewhat in different localities, consisting generally of a simple cloth dress with black velvet bands for trimming, an apron, and a white collar and cap, smooth and stiff. It is considered a disgrace, or at least immodest, for a Breton woman to allow her hair to be seen, and consequently these caps, sometimes two or three in number, conceal it completely. The peasant-girls in sport attempt to pull off each other's caps as the most mischievous thing they can do. Of course the women of the upper class are entirely Parisianized in their dress and manners, and therefore are not here considered. The men and women both wear sabots. The fishermen are dressed in ordinary clothes, their heads cov-

ered by the *béret*, a cap like the well-known Scotch cap, but the landsmen wear broad-brimmed hats with black velvet bands that hang down behind in long ribbons, giving a strangely infantile aspect to the otherwise rather grim person. Their blue coats come to the waist, and are trimmed with black velvet and brass buttons, and usually have no sleeves, the latter being attached to the waistcoat, also trimmed with brass buttons. The trousers resemble those of the Turk, but are white, not red. They are held in place by a belt or sash at the waist, and at the knee by leggings or long stockings. Formerly the men wore their hair long but this is not now the custom, though old men adhere to it still. The dress of both men and women varies much in ornamentation, that of the women being often highly elaborate, but invariably adhering to the patterns laid down by their ancestors, and never made over into a different style. Once good always good. They are far from being ashamed of their costume when they go out into the modern world, and when they visit Paris, if they ever do, they make no change in their dress, nor in their manners, which remain simple and unaffected. In walking the Breton has a habit of folding his arms instead of swinging them, as most people do ; and sometimes he utters a yell that would put a Comanche to the blush, and which drifts and echoes amongst the hills for miles. Rest for a few moments on any elevation on a fair day, and all around you at intervals here and there resounds this savage yell like a war-cry.

The principal religious ceremony, partaking in these days somewhat of the nature of a fair as well, is the *Pardon*, occurring at the different churches and chapels

on the saint's day to whom the structure is dedicated, and attracting people from all the country round. It has been illustrated in Meyerbeer's well-known opera, the *Pardon de Plöermel*, or *Dinorah* as it is called in English; and Jules Breton and other painters, have pictured it in various ways. In former times indulgences were granted to sinners on these occasions, and the benefits and efficacy of a Pardon are still firmly believed in. Women attend them to pray for the safety of husbands or fathers abroad or on the sea; and when sailors are saved from wrecks, by means of these prayers, they come in person to make the tour of the church on their knees, bringing sometimes a fragment of their ship, the garments they were saved in, wet with sea-water, or a miniature ship, as a commemorative offering to be suspended by a cord from the roof. Few churches or chapels are without one or more of these little boats swinging in mid-air.

I well remember the first Pardon I attended. There was a small, lonely chapel on a by-road about two miles from the village, the chapel of St. Jacques, a forlorn, tumble-down stone structure standing in an isolated position near an arm of the sea, the door generally half off its hinges and nothing inside but a crucifix and a stone basin containing holy-water. Round about were oaks that would have charmed the heart of a Druid, and a strange, broken-down, weather-beaten stone cross in front gave an additional air of antiquity to the dilapidated building. We could scarcely see how any saint with half a grain of pride could consent to have anything to do with such a neglected place, much less to hold a Pardon there, but we had the assurance of our

vivacious and veracious landlady that the saint would be there, positively, on that particular Sunday; and we set out, following the shore of the bay, crossing the long beach, and dragging our weary frames up the rough country road that led to the locality. We were suffering from a species of malaria with which one is apt to be afflicted before he is thoroughly acclimated. The day was warm, and when we arrived at the chapel we both felt exhausted. The building had been decorated inside and looked quite another place. Candles illuminated it and several priests were holding a service of prayer, while surrounding the structure were stalls of vendors of cider, nuts, raisins, rosaries, cakes, beads, ribbons, glass and china-ware, apples, crucifixes, shoestrings, prayer-books and almost anything the peasant life demanded. These things are purchased for personal use, or for offerings to the saint, to be afterward sold by a churchwarden at auction. Some saints are particular and will accept only special offerings, as fowls of a certain color, but most of them will take anything.

Behind the chapel, men, women and children in their quaint costumes knelt in invocation, forming an interesting picture. We regarded all with weary eyes, and descended to the bank of the estuary and threw ourselves on the cool sod in the shade of a tree. Finally we gathered strength enough of will and body to go again to the chapel for the purpose of obtaining refreshment at one of the stands. Cider appealed to mind and soul, and we drank copiously out of queer blue and white mugs that looked as if they had been resurrected from some tomb, and then laying in a stock of almonds, crept to the grateful shadow of a near-by hedge, to study the Pardon

at leisure. To our surprise, in about ten minutes we felt like new men; the vigor of youth was renewed within us and we rejoiced. Attributing our recuperation to the cider and almonds, we consumed more and again felt better, and after repeating the course several times we believed ourselves healed, and went homeward with a step as elastic as the conscience of an Ethiopian. Much we marvelled at our astonishing regeneration, but on mentioning it to Madame, our landlady, she exclaimed with a twinkle in her eye, "Mais, voilà, messieurs, vous avez été au Pardon de St. Jacques!" Here was the whole explanation, and St. Jacques did his work well, for neither of us ever again had the slightest return of the malady. If you are ailing, therefore, seek not the springs of Saratoga nor of Manitou, nor yet swallow noxious drugs, but go to a Pardon and be permanently cured. Probably the advocates of the Faith Cure would find in this Pardon Cure much testimony in favor of their theories. Some saints make a specialty of certain diseases, but the majority are general practitioners. The fine old churches present a strange and beautiful picture during a Pardon, with the hundreds of figures kneeling on the grass and the gray walls and Gothic windows as a background, all surrounded by tall trees, with crowds of peasants, the numerous stands with their wares, and a procession headed by priests and acolytes with censers, moving slowly around the edifice.

It is also the correct thing when you go to a Pardon to take back to the women of your acquaintance who remain behind some souvenir, a shawl-pin, a crucifix, a yard of calico or what not—something to remember the Pardon by.

The Bretons love open-air games, dances and sports. After a wedding, which is a joyous affair in Brittany, as like as not the whole party will go into the highway to dance instead of trying to do it in the small rooms, and they do not object to the lingering of the passer-by to watch them. On fête days wrestling is one of the amusements, a number of the best wrestlers retiring to a grassy field or meadow, where the crowd of spectators form a large ring and crane their necks over each other's shoulders to view the great contest, which continues with changing actors for hours. Bowling is another of their games. It is played with two or more large wooden balls, and can be carried on along the road in a sort of chase-and-chase way if the players desire to walk from one town to another. But the great delight is dancing, and the clang of the "wooden shoon" may often be heard from morning till night. Molloy's well-known song might easily have been composed in Concarneau, for there are the boats and the sailors and the dance and the merry tune. The step is apparently as simple as one, two, three, yet it is astonishingly difficult to acquire. The music is usually a brisk gavotte, reminding one of Bach, furnished by two Bretons perched on top of a hogshead or table, one playing the droning *biniau*, or bag-pipe, and the other the shrill *bombarde*, or hautboy, both keeping time with their sabots on the wood. So spirited is the air that it almost lifts you up and leads you off with the other dancers in spite of yourself. The dance is usually started by several of the men joining hands and shuffling round in time with the pipes, keeping in a diagonal line. Presently more come in and more lines are formed, going round with the peculiar step,

their faces as solemn as judges. Then the women start also in lines, and after a time the lines gradually break up and re-form with both sexes in each. The movement is extremely graceful, and there is such perfect unison that the spectator is completely charmed. The air is filled with the thwacking sound of sabots, the shrill piping and the droning of the biniau, and when a line comes straight forward in full movement the effect is strikingly picturesque.

There is a certain wildness about it all that carries you back ages, like so much else in the country. Indeed the whole time in Finistère, I felt as if I had been slid backward in the calendar several centuries, but at no time was this more vivid than one evening late, when I was walking alone on the highway several miles from the town. The moon shone brightly and the way was clear. I had not met a soul for more than half an hour, and the houses here were few and scattering. The gorse hedges appeared even more rugged than by daylight and the rough uncultivated lands on each side were bleak and wild. Suddenly I heard singing in the distance; a party of peasants approaching, I thought. The singing drew nearer as I went on, but I could see no one nor could I hear sounds of footsteps. Presently it appeared to come out of the ground at my right, and I looked to see if I had stumbled upon a Korigan-house, or upon the entrance to some underground temple of the Druids. The song was one of the weird, sharp, minor-key Breton choruses, and was strangely muffled. At last I discerned not far from the roadside a small house partially hidden by the inequalities of the ground. Not a ray of light came from the interior: every door

and window, closed by solid shutters, was as blank and gray in the misty light as the walls themselves, but the dance, whether Korigan or Druid, was proceeding merrily enough inside. Women's voices took up the first part of the refrain and the men's the second, all joining on the last portion, repeating and repeating while the sabots marked time on the earth floor. How strange, and far away it seemed—that song, that dance, that language of the past, with nothing modern within sight or sound for comparison, but myself, a solitary specimen of the newest race under the sun. I listened a few moments till my ear caught the tune, which I whistled till I arrived at my hotel.

A day or two later I happened to whistle it in the presence of old Père Garro, who served us in many ways, and to my surprise he shouted, "Ah! m'sieur, you have it well—it's a true old Breton song, that is!" Poor old Père Garro! his had been a hard lot, but he had borne it patiently, like the sturdy Breton that he was. We paid him (all he asked) for posing, washing brushes, going on errands, etc., the munificent sum of two dollars a week. He boarded and lodged and clothed himself, but, as we have seen, clothes are not worn in Finistère for adornment, lodging is not sought for display, and food is eaten to sustain life, not to minister to a pampered appetite. The life is in the open air and the labor is healthful and steady, without overtaxing either the muscular or nervous tissue. We are proud of our feverish haste, but after all, is it the best thing for us? The continent is yielding up its treasures, pouring them out as great rivers run, but the merchant drops dead in his counting-room, the mechanic sinks down by the forge, and the miner expires in the

darkness of the tomb, all ground to death under the wheels of the progress train, without knowing the delicious essence of the meadow breeze or appreciating the beauty of a summer sky.

The difference in activity and finish between Finistère and the United States is well illustrated by the difference in railway-building. Instead of rushing the road through and reconstructing afterwards, picking up the wrecks by the way, every detail must be perfect before the road is opened; even the substantial cut stone stations must be completed. Not much like some of our western roads, where freight cars serve as station, telegraph office, express office, even dining-hall. They build a few yards a day where we build several miles, but their few yards are done. The branch to Concarneau was nine miles long, and had been five years in construction, but it was perfect, complete as the main line itself; yet before the grand opening only the engineers had gone over it. The opening day was Sunday. The route from the station to the market-place, where a banquet was spread, was lined with flags for day and lanterns for night, and when the official train arrived, a cortege of soldiers, firemen and prominent citizens met the guests, and, headed by a brass-band led the proud way to the market hall. A sentry stationed on the ramparts of the Ville Close signalled when the procession arrived at a certain point, and the guns of a war-vessel boomed a salute. At noon the favored ones sat down to the dinner and remained feasting and speech-making till four o'clock, the band playing at intervals, while an ill-natured peasant or two prowled around the stone walls with jealous listening, cursing the French and their railways.

Dancing went on in the open square, the thwacking of the sabots and the lively music of the pipers mingling with the sounds of revelry from the market hall. At night the man-of-war fired another salute, elaborate fire-works amused the crowd, and not till a late hour was the town quiet again. The railway was finished, and in the morning went about its business as soberly as the oldest road in France.

They may be behind the times in Finistère, but they know better than we how to enjoy life; how to get a great deal out of a little. Better be rich, like Père Garro, with a few sous and contentment, than be poor like an American with the purse of a prince and the unsatisfied ambition of vanity. The Bretons are nearer to Nature than we are, and it is this, united to their charming landscape so full of mist and color, their picturesque ruins, their romantic coast and their fascinating history, that has rendered their country, particularly Finistère, so attractive to the artists of all nations, who, in these latter years, have made it their haunt and their home. Even the mills are full of grace and beauty. Faults, the Bretons have—what people have not?—and their land is not without its thorns, but the virtues predominate. You go there for a few weeks; you linger months, perhaps years, lured and soothed by the delicious seclusion from the excitement of modern life, which echoes away over yonder toward Paris, or leagues in the west across the sea; and if you venture to pass without the gates, you soon sigh for those rocky shores again, as the mountaineer in the city throng sighs for his camp-fire and the fragrance of his beloved pines.